with marketing, combine crop production with animal husbandry, fisheries and other remunerative farm and non-farm enterprises, all aimed at increasing production to keep India self sufficient in food production.

Crisis in FACT

1582. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:
PROF. P.J. KURIEN:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that public sector fertilizer companies including FACT are encountering serious problems due to price hike and non-availability of sufficent quanity of raw materials like Sulphur;

(b) whether it is also a fact that various units of FACT are either closed or on the verge of shut down owing to the above reasons;

(c) whether Government has taken/proposed to take comprehensive measures to overcome the crisis; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (d) FACT had been facing financial problems in the last few months due to steep increase in the prices and non-availability of sufficient quanity of raw materials like Sulphur and Phosphoric acid. The caprolactam plant and ammonium sulphate plant had to be closed temporarily. To compensate the losses of the company and to sustain its operations, Government has approved a one time grant of Rs.200 crore to FACT. The amount is being released to the company.

Demands of Bhopal tragedy victims

1583. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware of the Bhopal gas survivors' 850 km. padyatra from Bhopal to Delhi started in February, 2008;

(b) what progress has been made by Government in meeting the demands after their 1st Padyatra in 2006;

(c) the details of plans, to pin liability on Union Carbide Corporation for the contamination of groundwater and land in and around the factory site in Bhopal;

(d) the steps taken by CBI to extradite former Union Carbide Chairman Warren Anderson to face trial in India; and

(e) the steps taken by CBI to enforce Union Carbide Corporation's appearance in the criminal case in the Bhopal Chief Judical Magistrate's court?

THE MINISTER OF STATE THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Based on the sanction by the Government of India in April, 2006 for a project under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, the State Government of Madhya

Pradesh had sanctioned Rs. 14.18 crore to Bhopal Municipal Corporation for providing safe drinking water through pipe lines from the Kolar Reservoir to the 14 Localities situated around the former Union Carbide Plant Site. The Government of Madhya Pradesh was requested to take necessary measures for the medical, social, economic and environmental rehabilitation of the gas victims and their families. Further the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals had constituted a Coordination Committee under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary for effective implementation of the various ongoing Schemes/Programmes of the Central Government and the State Government of Madhya Pradesh for the welfare of the victims of Bhopal Gas Tragedy.

(c) The High Court of Madhya Pradesh at Jabalpur is hearing the Writ Petition No. 2802/ 2004, where Union of India is also a Respondent. The High Court had constituted a Task Force to monitor the process of environmental remediation at the former Union Carbide Plant Site at Bhopal. The matter is *sub-judice.*

(d) The CBI has informed that the extradition request for extradition of Warren Anderson was sent to the USA on 13.12.2002. The request was turned down by the USA Authorities saying that it failed to meet the requirements of article 2(i) and 9(iii) of the Extradition Treaty. The grounds on which the request was refused were examined by CBI and accordingly US authorities were requested to reconsider their decision. The matter is still pending with Ministry of External Affairs/US Authorities for execution.

(e) In the under trial case in Chief Judicial Magistrate's Courts, Bhopal, the prosecution evidence, statement of accused persons have been completed and presently the case is pending at the stage of Defence Evidence. Summons/warrants were issued by the court to enforce appearance of M/s Union Carbide Corporation. However, they did not appear before the court and were declared proclaimed offenders on 27.3.1992. As the company still did not appear before the court, the order for attachment of the 50.9% share of Union Carbide Corporation in Union Carbide India Limited was passed by the court on 30.4.92.

Patents of AIDS drugs

1584. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether HIV drugs to cost more as companies have started securing patents for drugs used to treat AIDS and related diseases;

(b) whether this will create a problem for around 2 million HIV patients in the country; and

(c) if so, what are the steps Government proposes to take to check the prices of drugs for HIV so that it is easily available to the patients?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (c) National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) has informed that in case the Patents are granted on drugs used to treat AIDS and related diseases, the cost of drugs might increase significantly and this may create problems for HIV patients in the country. However, the Indian Patent Act has certain safe guards to handle such situations. Besides this, NACO procures ARV drugs in bulk through International Competitive Bidding (ICB) from WHO pre-qualified companies. This bulk purchase helps in getting quality drugs at competitive costs. In addition, NACO has entered into MOU with